

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health and Aged Care

Senate Community Affairs References Committee

Inquiry into Excess Mortality

13 June 2024

PDR Number: IQ24-000073

Average time lag to formalise a death certificate

Spoken

Senator: Wendy Askew

Question:

Senator ASKEW: As a comparison, you mentioned the longer coronials and so on. What sort of average is the time lag to get the death certificate formalised?

Dr Gould: We could provide that on notice. The ABS actually provides quite detailed numbers looking at, basically, the cumulative percentage of deaths that have been certified and formalised in the months after the death has occurred.

Answer:

An overview of the data collection and death registration processes in Australia is provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on the Causes of Death, Australia methodology page (www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/causes-death-australia-methodology/2022).

A specific outline on the timeliness and completeness of death registration data may be found on the Provisional mortality statistics methodology page (www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/provisional-mortality-statistics-methodology/jan-feb-2024). In Australia, approximately 86-89% of deaths are certified by a doctor and approximately 95% of doctor-certified death registrations are received by the ABS within three months of a death. Coroner-certified deaths undergo extensive investigative processes which can delay registration times.